

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 3, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
Secretary  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

We write for information about the Department of Energy (DOE) work to accelerate development of technologies that may increase sustainability of the U.S. nuclear fuel cycle through nuclear fuel reprocessing and recycling. We specifically are interested in DOE's work to advance innovative fuel cycle technologies to a point that may be commercially and economically viable, may be used to reduce fuel security risks, and may help manage nuclear waste produced by the U.S. nuclear reactor fleet.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has highlighted fuel security risks globally, including nuclear fuel supply risks.<sup>1</sup> The situation has increased the urgency of addressing the security of America's nuclear fuel supply chains. As DOE confronts these immediate risks, we believe there is opportunity to harness recent technological innovations<sup>2</sup> in fuel reprocessing that may provide benefits to long-term fuel security. There is also opportunity to complement the government's waste management responsibilities. While licensing a permanent geologic repository, as required by law, must remain a priority, fuel reprocessing and recycling, along with advanced reactor technologies, offer additional promise to assist waste management by reducing the volumes of high-level waste and by creating a more sustainable fuel cycle than the current system.

In recent years, Congress has sought to address economic and security related uncertainties surrounding reprocessing and advanced reactor fuel cycles. In 2019, Congress directed the National Academies "to evaluate the merits and viability of different nuclear fuel cycles and technology options."<sup>3</sup> Congress also included provisions reauthorizing DOE fuel cycle research and funding through ARPA-E for fuel-cycle innovators in the Energy Act of 2020, which DOE currently is implementing. At the same time, key allies with large nuclear

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<sup>1</sup> See [Letter](#) from Energy and Commerce Republican Leader McMorris Rodgers to Department of Energy Secretary Granholm, April 27, 2022, linked [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, work at Argonne National Laboratory, linked [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> See *Explanatory Statement, H.R. 1865, Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020*, Congressional Record 165 (2019) pp. H11246, linked [here](#). That National Academies study is forthcoming this fall.

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fleets and adversaries like Russia and China are all studying or developing next generation nuclear fuel reprocessing to serve as an integral part of fuel cycles.<sup>4</sup>

DOE is critical to ensuring the United States maintains its nuclear leadership. In light of current fuel security risks, and the promise of recent technological innovations, we respectfully request that you provide to us the following: (1) A detailed update on DOE's nuclear fuel reprocessing research; (2) a description of how DOE can leverage existing resources, expertise, and authorities to develop innovative fuel cycle options for American industry; and (3) a description of DOE's work across the U.S. government, including with the Department of Defense and Department of State, to ensure development of such technology advances U.S. nuclear safety, security, and nonproliferation priorities.

We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to working to ensure American energy security and nuclear leadership.

Sincerely,



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Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



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Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



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Elise Stefanik  
Member of Congress



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Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress



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Jim Banks  
Member of Congress



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Buddy Carter  
Member of Congress

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, "Status and Trends in Pyroprocessing of Spent Nuclear Fuels," International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA-TECDOC-1967, September 2021, linked [here](#).

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Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress



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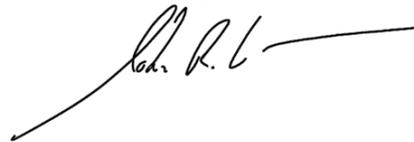
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Diana Harshbarger  
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Kevin Hern  
Member of Congress



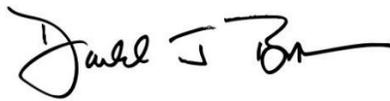
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Andy Barr  
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Nicole Malliotakis  
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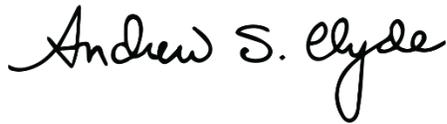
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